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AGrowStar  
Bonaire, GA

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L.L. Rogers & Son, Inc.  
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University of Georgia  
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University of Georgia  
Athens, GA



## GEORGIA AGRIBUSINESS COUNCIL

COUNCIL MISSION: "To advance the business of agriculture through economic development, environmental stewardship and education to improve the quality of life for all Georgians."

October 8, 2014

Chairman Thomas Wheeler  
Federal Communications Commission  
455 12th St., SW  
Washington, DC 20544

Chairman Wheeler and Commissioners:

Since 1966, the Georgia Agribusiness Council has been enhancing the quality of life for all Georgians by advancing the business of agriculture through economic development and environmental stewardship. We are always looking for ways to continue to foster and enhance economic growth in our state.

The Council represents over 850 businesses connected to all aspects of farming, from family farms to equipment dealers to fertilizer companies and more. Like other industries, agriculture has been transformed in recent years by the power of broadband. Farmers and agribusinesses use broadband apps to help them decide when to plant, when to irrigate, when to harvest, and when and where to sell their crops. These farms and businesses, as well as the employees and communities they serve in rural America, need more access to fast, reliable broadband.

Improving access to high-speed Internet and other technologies aimed at enhancing communication capabilities in rural Georgia is vital to food and fiber production, processing, and marketing in the 21st Century. The proposed merger between AT&T and DirecTV promises more investment to bring high-speed Internet to small towns and rural areas of Georgia. This investment will provide greater access to high speed Internet service and bring new competition to the market so that Georgians living in rural areas will have a wider variety of choices available to them. In turn, this will enable Georgia residents to be better able to compete in today's broadband-based economy.

The people of Georgia deserve an even playing field, no matter in what part of the state they choose to live and work. We know full well that access to broadband constitutes the foundation for economic success and development, not to mention access to important education and healthcare tools and resources. With these likely benefits, we believe this merger between AT&T and DirecTV will be good for access, market competition, and enhance the quality of life for those living in rural areas. Agriculture is the dominant force in Georgia's economy accounting for more than \$76.9 billion in economic impact and over 375,800 jobs. A healthy agricultural economy provides a foundation for ever improving quality of life that is enjoyed by Georgia citizens statewide.

We hope you will act on this issue in the very near future. Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Bryan R. Tolar  
President

